Bay-Delta Sport Fishing Enhancement Stamp Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2006, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Yolo Wildlife Headquarters

Attendees

Jim Crenshaw, Committee Chair John Buettler, Committee Jim Edgar, Committee Carter Fickes, Committee Phil Havlicek, Committee Ken Jones, Committee Mike Moore, Committee John Ryzanych, Committee Bob Strickland, Committee

Neil Manji, DFG, Chief Fisheries Program Branch Sonke Mastrup, DFG, Deputy Director Nancy Foley, DFG, Chief Enforcement Heather McIntire, DFG

Minutes

January minutes were approved unanimously.

Action Log Items

- 14 Biggest opportunities. Tom Cannon is here to discuss his striped bass evaluation.
- 15 Status of Authorization. This is on today's agenda.
- 20 Striped Bass Stamp Fund Update (SBSF). The SBSF Committee has not met.
- 23 SBSF Press Release. The SFSB Committee has not met.
- 24 Julie Oltmann's legislative update. Included in your meeting packet.
- 36 Fisheries Consultant. Subcommittee will determine if there is a need. This item is tabled until the next meeting.
- 37 Fisheries Consultant. Add subcommittee report to agenda.
- 38 Monitoring Activities. Provide Committee with activities near projects when necessary. N/A at this meeting.

- 50 New Project Ideas. Add to agenda.
- 58 Financial Overview. Provide Committee with a financial overview at each meeting.
- 63 Determine how the Committee could hire a fisheries consultant. The Department hires consultants regularly and it should not be difficult.
- 64 Fisheries Consultant. Subcommittee will lead a discussion of the role, needs and duties of a fisheries consultant. This item is tabled until the next meeting.
- 67 Seek a BDSFES logo through competition. Contract booted this RFP to our outreach department and they provided a logo for your consideration.
- 69 Invite Sonke for a Budget 101 talk. Postponed.
- 70 Sturgeon genetic proposal. Include in meeting packet for next meeting.
- 71 E-mail Committee to see how many signs they would like. May Lynn is bringing signs to today's meeting.
- 72 Invite May Lynn to next meeting. She is presenting at today's meeting.
- 73 Invite the head of the Fish Salvage Program to the next meeting. He will not be here today.
- 74 Determine if we can use Central Valley angler funds on our projects. We have our own funding now and the Central Valley Angler program is underway.
- 75 By-laws, attendance, etc. to agenda. This item is on today's agenda.
- 76 Legislative review to determine if there have been any changes on how we can spend the money.
- 77 Add SDIP to next agenda. This is on today's agenda.
- 78 Invite Dan Odenweller to discuss his striped bass work. Postponed until next agenda.
- 79 Invite Tom Cannon to discuss his striped bass work. He is on today's agenda.

Warden Update (Nancy Foley, Chief Enforcement)

The sturgeon poaching rings are very sophisticated and make a lot of money. It took several months of investigation to bust this ring. Operation Delta Beluga III resulted in the arrest of 9 people and confiscation of sturgeon roe, sturgeon meat, shark fins, sea cucumbers, and caviar processing materials. All of the people arrested have been cited or were previously under investigation prior to operation Delta Beluga III. The special units wardens assigned to this operation charged 480 overtime hours to the BDSFES fund.

Currently, penalties for sturgeon poaching are not great enough to stop poaching. Penalties for poaching California's resources are varied and depend

on the judge. In the past, letter writing campaigns to judges have been successful.

California Connected covered the Delta sturgeon issue. Check the internet at http://www.californiaconnected.org/tv/archives/436 to view the program.

Currently, the biggest issue with enforcement is pay discrepancy with other law enforcement agencies. Starting salary for wardens is significantly lower than other enforcement agencies such as highway patrol. This discrepancy makes it difficult to find and retain wardens. Enforcement is working on educating the legislature on warden value and the pay disparity issue.

- ACTION ITEM: Create a project tracking spreadsheet.
- ACTION ITEM: Expand the BDSFES mailing list to include Board of Supervisors and County Fish and Game Commissions for BDSFES counties.

<u>Authorization Status</u> (Sonke Mastrup, Deputy Director)

The Governor has signed the budget and the BDSFES request for spending authority was included in the budget! We can start spending money as of July 1, 2006. The Department's BCP includes \$1.5 million in authority for staff and projects. The Central Valley Angler Survey's spending authority is separate from this \$1.5 million.

The Department of Finance requires that the dedicated account maintain a five percent reserve as long as there are stamp sales. They were also adamant that annual spending authority not exceed annual revenue, regardless of how much is in the account.

Now that the BDSFES has spending authority, do we want to create a press release to advertise that we are "in business?" Another venue might be to update the BDSFES website.

 ACTION ITEM: Invite Anne Baker to the next meeting to discuss ways to update the BDSFES website. We may want to consider adding budget information, project lists, reports, meeting presentations, etc.

There are concerns that it is so difficult to get state contracts in place and how will that improve now that we have spending authority?

Status of Project Proposals (Heather McIntire, DFG)

BBAC Release Boat

This project has been problematic. The State cannot give funds to a group to fix their non-state boat; however, we may be able to create a service contract for the BBAC to go to tournaments and release bass.

Salmon Acclimation

This contract did not occur early enough for prospective bidders to have their equipment ready in time to coordinate with hatchery releases. The contract is in progress now in order for bidders to have enough time to prepare equipment prior to the spring release of hatchery salmon.

Public Solicitation Notice (PSN)

The PSN is nearly completed and ready for review. Both the Committee and Department managers will review the PSN at the same time. This process will allow us to advertise for all project types at one time. The unknown in this process is how long it will take to process. The PSN is an annual process.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

This will be a parallel process to the PSN. If the PSN is delayed, we will still have RFP's in the system. This process is intended to be a back up for the PSN process and used only in the short-term.

<u>Pelagic Organism Decline Update</u> (Randy Baxter, DFG)

This presentation has been postponed.

Department of Health Services- Health Warning Signs (May Lynn Tan)

It took over a year to create the signage, get the needed translations, and print. Now the DHS is posting signs in Sacramento, San Joaquin, Contra Costa, Solano, and Alameda counties. This sign has a Delta only focus.

Currently, DHS has posted 79 signs: 21 in Contra Costa, none in Sacramento, 20 in San Joaquin, 15 in Solano, and 23 in Yolo. Follow-up evaluation has shown that some are being vandalized and that the better signs are posted the less likely they are to be vandalized.

DHS plans to continue posting, tracking, and evaluating the postings. They plan to reinforce the signs with plywood or acrylic to reduce vandalism. They will increase their outreach to businesses, private marinas, and bait shops for additional posting locations. DHS will also develop a survey to determine if anglers are reading the signs.

Since this is a pilot study, DHS is tracking where the signs are being posted, how well they fair, and if anglers are seeing and reading them. May Lynn brought signs for the Committee to distribute, but we need to track where they go by

number. Please sign-out for your signs by number. May Lynn will be contacting you for posting information.

<u>Striped Bass Evaluation</u> (Tom Cannon, Wildlands Inc.)

Tom Cannon presented a summary of his striped bass evaluation that he did for the 4-pumps advisory committee. Tom looked at ways to improve striped bass population estimates, improvements to salvage of striped bass from the pumping facilities, potential reasons for striped bass die-offs in the summer, the effectiveness of the CALFED program, the Two-Agency Fish Agreement of 1986, and the current status of striped bass.

The summer townet survey and the fall midwater trawl have been following Delta species trends since the 1960's. The summer townet index looks at striped bass up to about 38 mm. Until striped bass reach 38 mm they are more susceptible to being drawn in by the pumps. The fall midwater trawl looks at striped bass greater than 38 mm. Using these two surveys you can estimate how many of the eggs and larvae survive beyond the period where they are susceptible to the pumps. These two surveys have been in existence for a long time and they provide good trend data for the striped bass population. Both these indices show a steep decline in the striped bass population since the 1960's. There is a similar decline with delta smelt.

Looking at exports and fish salvage show that striped bass salvage has also decreased over the last twenty years. Tom noted that there used to be a striped bass salvage program where a contractor received the salvage striped bass from the pumping facilities and grew them out for a year. Striped bass salvage is so low now that it would be impossible to have a similar program now. Delta smelt salvage is also much lower.

Annual exports are increasing and exports impact fish populations.

The CALFED program was intended to "fix" the Delta. Of the \$210 million dedicated to projects only \$0.3 million is going towards the Delta. The \$0.3 is for the Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan (DRERIP). They are focused on the Pelagic Organism Decline (POD).

Tom believes there are actions that can improve the situation: improvements to the striped bass population estimate can improve the survival of salvaged fish, and evaluate chemical contamination in the Delta and how it affects striped bass survival. Tagging and recovering more striped bass tags could improve striped bass population estimates. Salvaged fish could be acclimated before release. Funding studies to evaluate the impacts of chemical contamination on striped bass survival. Initial results indicate that chemical contamination reduces a striped bass' ability to survive the transition from yolk sac to active feeder and liver damage reduces adult fishes overall survival. Liver damage caused by

chemical contamination may contribute to the annual summer die-offs of striped bass.

In addition, Tom points out that there is a whole list of things that should have been done through the Two-Agency Fish Agreement of 1986 that were not done. The list included in the minutes is not inclusive; please see his hand-out for the complete list.

- Reduce water exports for specific periods
- Increase Sacramento and San Joaquin River flows
- Use Delta outflow to position the entrapment zone in Suisun Bay
- Control introductions of exotic species
- Modify SWP and CVP operations to speed fish outmigration through the estuary
- Consolidate and relocate Delta diversions
- Eliminate reversed flows
- Construct an isolated transfer facility
- Construct new or additional fish screens
- Reconfigure intake to improve the survival of salvaged fish
- Reduce predation in Clifton Court Forebay
 - ACTION ITEM: Send Tom's report to the Committee.

Sturgeon Genetics Proposal

This item is tabled to the next meeting.

 ACTION ITEM: Add sturgeon genetics proposal to the next agenda and include another copy of the proposal in the meeting packet.

By-laws (Committee)

The Committee believes that attendance has become an issue - there was not a quorum at the last meeting. If you are unable to attend a meeting, please contact Jim Crenshaw or Heather McIntire.

Mike Moore has not attended any meetings since his first meeting. The DFG has been unable to contact him, despite several attempts.

 ACTION ITEM: Contact Mike Moore to determine his intentions for this Committee.

Resolution Process (John Beuttler, Committee)

The Committee should have a process in place for times when the Department does not act on the Committee's recommendations. The process should provide a written summary of the issue to the Director, potentially a meeting with the Director, and a decision made by the Director. The Committee should be

responsible for drafting the letter to the Director and the Department will deliver the letter to the Director.

 ACTION ITEM: John will draft a resolution process for Committee approval.

<u>South Delta Improvement Program</u> (John Beuttler, Committee)

The Governor received 2,000 pieces of mail and 4,000 postcards from anglers regarding exports and the POD. The Governor will not allow any additional exports until we understand what is happening with the POD.

New Business

Sturgeon Punch Card

The Emergency Sturgeon Regulations have expired and the old regulations are now back in place. The Department is going through the sport fish regulation change process to change the 2007 fishing regulations. Part of the proposed regulation change is to start managing sturgeon and to do what we need to be able to track sturgeon fishing. The new proposal includes a sturgeon punch card. The card would be required of all anglers including youth anglers (16 and under). Information gathered from the punch card will enable the Department to better control poaching, better understand the fisheries, and better understand the sturgeon population.

Estimates for the punch card range from nothing to \$7.50 per angler. The Department is reluctant to add an additional cost to Delta anglers and would like the Committee to consider supporting part of the punch card cost.

ACTION ITEM: Add sturgeon punch card to next agenda.